Canadian War Achievements

IT would be difficult indeed to determine which of the great overseas dominions of the British Empire stands first for loyalty, devotion and heroism in the world war of 1914-1918. Certainly Canada stands second to none. Every patriotic Canadian must thrill with pride when he reads the story of the part which she played in the great drama; and no patriotic Englishman can read it without gratitude.

A spirited and accurate narrative of Canada's share in the mighty contest has been written by Col. George G. Nasmith of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and published in a volume entitled *Canada's Sons and Great Britain in the World War.* A book like this should serve to perpetuate in scores and hundreds of Canadian households the proudest memories of the valor of their countrymen.

The abundantly illustrated volume enjoys the sanction of Gen. Sir Arthur W. Currie, K. C. B., the commander of the Canadian Corps in France, who contributes a commendatory introduction in which he says that the men under him could give lessons of stoicism to Roman soldiers.

"Canadians," he says, "derive their parentage chiefly from the Scotch, the Irish, the English and the French; and while they have inherited traits from every one of these races, yet they are quite distinct from them all. All Canadians are pioneers themselves or the immediate descendants of pioneers." Hence the intelligent initiative which characterized the operations of the Canadian divisions, the general "wideawakeness" of the men and their steadfastness under the most trying conditions of novel methods of warfare.

While the Canadians, according to Gen. Currie, were most of all engrossed in their job, they were by no means callous. "There was more tenderness in their hearts than words can tell; and if Victoria Crosses were given in this war for the saving of human life at the risk of one's own Canadian soldiers could boast ten times the fifty-four they now so proudly wear."

The permanent military force of the Dominion of Canada at the beginning of the war was only about 3,000 men. Four divisions and a cavalry corps were subsequently enlisted and sent overseas numbering 418,052 men, of whom 35,684 were killed in action and 12,437 died of wounds. The total number of wounded in the Canadian Expeditionary Force was 155,839. Only 3,049 were captured by the Germans and only 398 reported as missing. On the other hand, the Canadians captured 45,000 prisoners, 850 artillery guns and 4,200 machine guns.

The greatest forward movement made in one day during the war was the advance of the Canadian troops on the first day of the second battle of Amiens, in August, 1918, when they moved ahead 14,000 yards. Other notable engagements in which they distinguished themselves, such as would have been emblazoned on their regimental flags in former times, were the second battle of Ypres and the fighting at Festubert and Givenchy in 1915; St. Eloi, Sanctuary Wood, Hooge and the battle of the Somme, in 1916; Vimy Ridge, Arleux, Fresnoy and Passchendale, in 1917, and the Battle of Arras, in September, 1918, where they assisted in breaking a part of the Hindenburg line.

The Distinguished Service Order was awarded to 513 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, the Military Cross to 1882, and the Military Medal to 6,697, while 3,333 Canadians were mentioned in despatches.

Col. Nasmith has constructed his book on the plan of giving the reader a general history of the war in its larger features, reserving for more detailed treatment those events and operations in which the Canadian military forces participated most prominently. The author himself was in the thick of the fighting at the Battle of Ypres in April, 1915, when Sir John French said of the Canadians who saved the day that "The bearing and conduct of these splendid troops averted a disaster which might have been attended with the most serious consequences."

In this series of engagements 20,000 Canadians, with only eight months' training, encountering chlorine gas for the first time, and practically unsupported by reserves, "held their own for days against the most highly trained troops of Europe." A French division on the front, consisting largely of Mororocan troops, had been overwhelmed by the fumes of the gas and forced to abandon their positions. This left a dangerous gap in the line which the Canadians were suddenly called upon to fill and hold. The manner in which they performed this task excited the admiration of military men throughout the world. England proudly acknowledged that the Colonials had "made good" and were qualified to rank with "the fust class fightin' men" of the British and French armies.

From that time until the day of the armistice the Canadian soldiery displayed the same characteristics—steadiness, endurance, resourcefulness, boldness and undaunted courage—which won for them such universal admiration in their first great baptism of fire.

Canada is proud also of her officers as well as her men, and most of all that she produced in Sir Arthur Currie a Canadian worthy to command them. "Currie has been one of the finds of the war," says Col. Nasmith. He was born in the Province of Ontario in 1875, went to British Columbia when a young man and taught school at Victoria for several years, and then became a life insurance and real estate broker.

In 1897 he enlisted in the Eighth Canadian Garrison Artillery, of which militia regiment he had become the commanding officer in 1909. He then resigned from the artillery to raise a Highland infantry regiment.

It was only natural that a militia officer of such zeal and experience should be selected to command a brigade when the Canadian Expeditionary Force was organized. In September, 1915, he became a division commander, and in 1917 commander of the entire Canadian Corps in Europe. It was undoubtedly a remarkable fact that "a real estate dealer from the Province of British Columbia by his sheer ability was able to elaborate a fighting force of incomparable effectiveness." Sir Arthur Currie's success, like that of Sir John Monash, the business man who rose to be commander of the Australian Corps, has shown "that a staff college course, though desirable, was not absolutely essential, and that ability, aptitude for the work, resourcefulness, opportunity and actual experience in the field were capable of producing great soldiers."

This book is a welcome Canadian contribution to the literature of the war.

CANADA'S SONS AND GREAT BRITAIN IN THE WORLD WAR. By Col. GEORGE G. NASMITH. Toronto and Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company.

Real Fairies Return

IN *Tales From the Secret Kingdom,* confided to little boys and girls who either read or listen to fascinating gossip about dragons and princes and magic sandals and whispering trees and lucky pennies and wonderful journeys, are months of happy evening readings by the fireside and on the garden porch at sunset in late summer afternoons just before early bedtime.

Simple, directly narrated in the manner of the old folk tales, these romances of enchantments and all things nice and thrilly and surprising to be done—as only real fairies can do them—are truly true tales, even as grandmother heard them and wept and laughed over them when she was a little girl.

But the stories are new, there are hitherto unfamiliar sprites and elves, quite a number of desperately wicked and cross old witches and a surprising and fearful aggregation of dragons, ogres and monsters.

The silhouette illustrations with every story are reminiscent in their delicacy of French children's books. Katharine Buffum is the artist.

Tales From the Secret Kingdom weave a pleasant enchantment.

TALES FROM THE SECRET KINGDOM. By ETHEL M. GATE. Illustrated by KATHARINE BUFFUM. New Haven: Yale University Press.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS inform us, under heavy seal, that "Jacinto Benavente, the subtlest as well as the most versatile of dramatists, is at the same time one of the sanest of men. He does all his writing after 2 o'clock in the morning, finishing before dawn." We are all for Benavente—but we're hanged if we see the connection between these two statements about him!

A Critic of Our War Effort

THE keenest (though not an unkindly) critical study that has as yet been made of our war effort by a foreign military authority is *America's Race to Victory* by Lieut.-Col. E. Requin of the French army. Col. Requin came to the United States with Joffre in May, 1917, he being then a member of the French General Staff. As one of the French military representatives in this country he had unusual opportunites to see and study all that we did in preparing for the war and carrying through our part in it. And although he admits he knew practically nothing of our political system when he arrived here, he studied it to sufficient advantage to grasp its weaknesses as manifested under the test of war. In common with our own Gen. Upton this French officer sees that it is our political system which inevitably hampers our military powers—that and our confirmed pacifism as a nation.

In his study of our purely military effort the important features are not its historical aspect, but rather its critical viewpoint, also some rays of light it throws in dark corners of our relations with our allies and of our own military closet. In the beginning Col. Requin found it "nothing less than astounding to see in what a state of *military unpreparedness* the United States had undertaken to enter the war." He cites, for example, the theoretical form of our army division at the time of our entry, "a unit practically impossible to use in modern warfare."

He says, "The United States had assigned a number of excellent officers as observers with the French and British armies," but "unfortunately, the information which these officers furnished regarding both the material organization and the methods of combat of the Allied armies remained practically unutilized. Both the Intelligence Department and the organization of the General Staff were so defective that the information furnished by these officers was neither appreciated at its just value nor put in order and used." In justice to the General Staff it should be remembered that the National Defense Act limited that body to a personnel of fifty-five officers, not more than half of whom could be on duty in Washington. In the light of the number of officers detailed to the foreign general staffs, ours was absurdly small.

Col. Requin points out our lack of schools to train officers, "and by an inexplicable anomaly the essential schools which had formerly been in operation (General Staff Schools, School of Fire for Field Artillery) were closed." He says that "as a matter of fact the American General Staff included some excellent officers, but considered as a General Staff it did not exist." Again he shows that "by an anomaly which can be explained only by the essentially pacific policy of the United States there existed no directors responsible for the organization and instruction of the essentially fighting branches of the service: the infantry, the field artillery, the cavalry." In so far as the field artillery is concerned, that is a defect since corrected, for we have had a Chief of Field Artillery since May, 1918.

He continues, in discussing the difficulties of getting the proper cooperation between the "Front" in France and the "Rear" in the United States:

"In this connection it may be pointed out that the relative inaction of the General Staff at Washington and the lack of military chiefs duly invested with indisputable authority resulted in much too long delays. This disadvantage was aggravated by a lack of close relations between the rear and the front, the Staff officers in America being manifestly too little informed as to what their Expeditionary Force was doing in France." Of another phase of this General Staff weakness he says: "Certain reforms encountered the opposition of an obstinate minority of officers whom their temperament, their military training, or their age debarred from new ideas. Perhaps they were all the more antagonistic to these innovations because the latter appeared to them to be demanded far less by the experience of a war unknown to them than by the very men who had made that war, that is to say, by *foreigners.*

One of the most significant statements in Col. Requin's work relates to our aviation programme. He writes: "The high hopes entertained by the American people of an abundant and rapid production of airplanes and equipment were doomed to disappointment. The Allies, and France in particular, had need of raw materials and the detached parts which American manufacturers were furnishing them. Hence *the Allies did not encourage* the United States to adopt the models which had already proved their worth at the front."

This statement has never appeared in print before, so far as I know, and doubtless answers the frequently heard question why we did not adopt successful foreign models in the beginning of our attempt to make army airplanes in "quantity."

The cramping effect of our traditionally small military force in peace times appears where Col. Requin is showing how the plan for cooperation in instruction by foreign officers was begun. He says that it was the French General Staff that was able "to save America from many gropings and errors, from heavy losses in men and money. . . . That is why, in place of the timid collaboration of thirteen French officers proposed by the War College to Marshal Joffre in May, 1917, Gen. Pershing recommended that 165 should be called, together with the same number of British officers, supplemented, respectively, by the same number of non-commissioned officers."

This incident also reveals Pershing's capacity for seeing things in a big way, as he did from the moment he arrived in France. But this plan had its disadvantages, as Col. Requin points out, for "the foreign advisers, *assigned to teach certain specialties, were not qualified to teach anything else.*"

Naturally, Col. Requin gives us credit for what we did, and his praise is well justified. But in reviewing his book here I have chosen to give his criticism rather than his commendations, since it is intelligent criticism we need most in our military affairs.

It will be a great pity if the United States, which has learned so much of fortitude, of military knowledge, of a supreme national effort and of enormous sacrifice from the French since 1914, cannot accept from her the finest lesson of all, that from the manner in which the French practise universal military service to the end France has the finest and most democratic army in the world. We are hag-ridden, in a military sense, by the bogy of "the Prussian military system," and yet we cannot see that a nation can have a military system on the same general plan as France has which is an honor and a glory to her name.

Col. Requin's book has the *imprimatur* of both Marshal Foch, who seems to have suggested some slight changes in the chapter devoted to *The American Army in Battle,* and of our own Chief of Staff, Gen. March, who has written an introduction to the text. W. B. McC.

AMERICA'S RACE TO VICTORY. By LIEUT.-COL. E. REQUIN. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Let 'Em Read the Pictures.

THE Frogs o' Poolo, by Joshua F. Crowell, is a book to give your nephews and nieces, but not your own sons and daughters if you read aloud to them. It's a large, pleasant looking book, with a colored picture in the front and drawings of the dramatis personæ on about every page. The dramatis personæ, being spiders, ants, crabs and such folk, provide admirable subjects for the artist, and very likely you will be asked after a busy day in the office to interpret in the nursery the adventures of Amanda Bee and Mrs. Bethulia Ball Bug and Barney Barnacle.

But the warning against reading aloud holds, for Mr. Crowell indulges a dreadful propensity to rhyme whenever a rhyme comes to him, whether in his prose or in his verse, and it must have a highly questionable effect on the subconscious mind of the child, the only part considered nowadays. And then puns—so many puns. But I suppose children have survived worse things. J. C. M.

THE FROGS O' POOLO. By JOSHUA F. CROWELL. Boston: The Four Seas Company.